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ABSTRACT

Extending the idea of business cards to the literature classroom, this lesson plan discusses having students make business cards for characters and authors. During two 50-minute lessons, students will: identify appropriate symbols that relate to their authors or characters; interact with classmates to give and receive feedback; and explore how audience and purpose shape their writing. When students make business cards they are invited to think symbolically to create a short, simple text that represents the target appropriately--providing a title, relevant images, and other pertinent information. The instructional plan, a list of web resources, student assessment/reflection activities, and a list of National Council of Teachers of English/International Reading Association (NCTE/IRA) Standards addressed in the project are included. Three sample business cards, a planning sheet and rubric for business card book reports are attached. (RS)

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ED 476 409

Book Report Alternative: Character and Author Business Cards

Author

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Grade Band

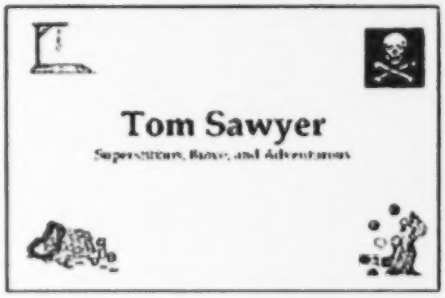
6-8

Estimated Lesson Time

Two 50-minute class sessions

Overview

In the business world, people often exchange business cards when they meet. When this happens, a single 3.5" by 2" card contains all the information that the people share. After returning to the office and looking at that business card again, will the recipient truly remember the person related to the card? Will the words and images on the card help? Will the business card do its job?



We can extend this idea to the literature classroom by having students make business cards for characters and authors. When students make business cards they're invited to think symbolically to create a short, simple text that represents the target appropriately—providing a title, relevant images, and other pertinent information. In short, in a very small space, writers have to create a text that will make the character or author memorable.

From Theory to Practice

This activity invites the student to think symbolically. The students choose a font for their character or author, find icons or images for the character or author, and compose related text. These student representation of the character or author with their multifaceted texts using color, symbols, images, texts, and metaphor succeed in the classroom because they provide a snapshot of the students' comprehension of the ideas in the texts in a very concise form.

Adapted from Gretchen Lee. 2000. "Technology in the Language Arts Classroom: Is It Worth the Trouble?" *Voices from the Middle* 7.3 (March): 24-32.

Student Objectives

Students will

- identify appropriate symbols that relate to their authors or characters.
- interact with classmates to give and receive feedback.
- explore how audience and purpose shape their writing.

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Resources

- Template for Microsoft Word

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- Gandalf's Business Card
- Hermione Granger's Business Card
- Business Card Planning Sheet
- Rubric for Business Cards
- Tom Sawyer's Business Card

Instructional Plan

Resources

- Copies of the example business cards for Tom Sawyer, Hermione Granger, and Gandalf; or create overhead transparencies to share with students
- Copies of the Business Card Planning Sheet
- Copies of the Rubric for Business Cards
- Computers with word processor software
- Sample business cards from various local businesses or people you've met. (Note: many businesses have business cards propped up and available for the taking near the receptionist or checkout area. If you pick up cards as you see them, you'll always have a ready collection on hand. You might also check with local printers who make business cards for samples.)
- Optional—business card blanks or heavy stock paper cut to the appropriate size; or perforated business card pages for a laser or inkjet printer (available in office supply stores).
- Optional—peel-and-stick magnetic sheets precut to the size of business cards. These magnetic sheets are typically available in stationery and office supply stores, and the business cards can be attached to these magnetic sheets to make refrigerator/white board magnets. This makes an impressive classroom display at the end of the project.

Preparation

1. Before this lesson, students will read a book independently, in literature circles, or as a whole class.
2. Ask students to bring copies of the book that will be the focus of their business cards to class for reference.
3. Make copies or overheads of the sample business cards, the planning sheet, and the rubric.
4. Practice the steps for creating business cards with a word processor using your computers and software. You may want to provide your students with more specific instructions that are customized for your software program.
5. Find sources for clip art that are appropriate for your class. Typically a small clip art library is included with word processing programs; however, additional images may be needed. Have URLs on hand that students can use to find images for their business cards.

   Optional: Depending upon your goals and the resources available, students can also draw original images on their business cards with markers, create images in a program such as Paint or PhotoShop, or scan images for their cards.

Instruction and Activities

Session One:

1. Introduce the writing activity, sharing the planning sheet, rubric, and example business card.

   a. Generally explain that students will be making business cards that include elements from the list of options on the planning sheet that are appropriate for their character or author. The

business cards can be given away or traded with other students. One copy can also go to the librarian who can share them with other students at the school.

b. Share the example business cards with students and explain the assignment, pointing out each of the parts that are included. Discuss other elements that could be added to the cards.
c. Lead students through discussion of the key elements for each part. Sample discussion questions can include the following:

- What are the important characteristics of a tagline or description of a business or professional? What do the words in the tagline on the sample card tell you about the character?
- What details make sense for the character? Is there an address? Would phone or e-mail information make sense?
- What products and/or services can you associate with the character or author?
- What typeface best fits the character or author? How large should it be?
- What colors belong on the business card? How do the colors relate to the other elements of the card?
- What kind of a logo would best represent the character or author and why?
- How do the symbols on the business card relate to the text? What ideas might you keep in mind as you choose clip art?

2. Once you're satisfied that students understand the assignment, they can begin work with the Business Card Planning Sheet. Students can work individually or in groups on this project.
3. Encourage students to interact with one another, to share and receive feedback on their plans for business cards. Since these business cards will be shared in the class as well as in the library, hearing the feedback and comments of other students helps writers refine their work for their audience.
4. Students can continue working on the project for homework if desired.

Session Two:

1. Remind students of the goals and elements included in this project. Answer any questions students have.
2. To make business cards, have your students follow these basic steps, adapting them for the word processor that is available on your computers:
   a. Choose one of the following options, based on the resources you have available:
      - Open up the Business Card Template in Microsoft Word.
      - Open a new document and insert 2 columns and 4 rows. Space the columns and rows out to be 3.5" columns and 2" rows.
      - Open a new document using one of the business card layouts available (see your word processor documentation for additional help).
      - If you are using perforated business card forms, follow the instructions that have been included with the forms.
   b. Invite students to compose their text and add their images to one of the business card rectangles. In addition to clip art, students can use Word Art in their word processor to make fancier versions of some of the words on their cards (see the help in your word processor for details on how to use this option).
   c. Once students have the card composed as they want it, have them copy the contents of the first cell in the table, and paste it to the additional seven cells in the document. The eight cards should fit on one sheet of 8.5" by 11" paper.
   d. As students consider different options for their cards, you may suggest that they try one layout option in one cell of their table and another layout option in a different cell so that they can compare the two layouts side-by-side.
   e. Remind students to put their names on the back of the business cards.
3. While students work, again encourage them to interact with one another, to share and receive feedback on their plans for business cards.

4. After the business cards are printed out, students can decorate them with markers or other classroom supplies.
5. As students finish, ask them to turn in two business cards (one for you and one for the librarian). Encourage students to share and trade their additional business cards.

Web Resources

Business Card Designs by Daniel Will-Harris
http://www.will-harris.com/design/biz-cards.htm
This portfolio site is meant to show the work of graphic designer Daniel Will-Harris. If you look at the site from a different perspective, however, you have a series of cards that include information from the designer about the decisions that he's made. A great resource for showing students how an author's purpose and audience shape the work he does.

Various Business Card Design Advice Sites
The sites listed below all offer advice to business professionals designing or seeking designers for cards that they will use in their day-to-day work. Some of the information is irrelevant then—for instance, your students shouldn't be concerned about hiring a professional printer or the thickness of the paper that they use. On the other hand, these pages explore tips on such information as font size, use of product names, and even the name of the person featured on the card. You could easily divide students into groups, having each explore one of the sites and report back to the class on the relevant findings for your character and author business cards.

- What Does Your Card Say?
  http://www.doncooper.com/a_cards_7.html
- Use Business Cards Wisely
  http://iconix.cc/business_card_tips.htm
- Anti-Formula Thinking: Double Duty Business Cards
  http://www.ideabook.com/bizcard.htm
- Rethinking Business Cards
  http://www.ideabook.com/rethink/recards.htm

Microsoft's Digital Clip Art Gallery
http://dgl.microsoft.com/
If you're working with a Microsoft Word Processor, this digital clip art collection connects neatly to your word processing document. Check the images to ensure that they are appropriate for your students.

Student Assessment/Reflections

For more formal assessment, use the Rubric for Business Cards which is tied to the elements included in the planning sheet.

On the other hand, nothing is as useful as the feedback that they'll receive by sharing their business cards with their peers. Informal feedback from students who read the cards and search out the related book are excellent feedback for students.

NCTE/IRA Standards

3 - Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).

11 - Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.

12 - Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).

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—Rubeus Hagrid

Planning Sheet for Business Card Book Reports

Your business card may include any of the following items. Choose the options that make the most sense for your character or author and the job or qualities that you're emphasizing on the business card.

- Name of individual
- Name of business or organization
- Address
- Phone number
- E-mail address
- Web page address
- Job title of individual
- Tagline or description of business or organization
- Logo
- Image(s)—including purely decorative elements
- List of services or products

Use the following questions to guide your decisions about what information to include on the business cards and how to design the layout of the card:

Character or Author—Which character or author are you making a business card for? How would the character or author be most likely to use the card? In other words, who would the character or author give the card to, and what would the recipient be likely to do with the card? (You're thinking about the audience and purpose for the card here.)

Products and Services—What products and services is the character or author best suited for? Does the character or author perform a particular job in the book? What talents might you highlight on the card?

Tagline and Characteristics—What are the words and ideas to relate to the character or author? What jobs does the character or author have? Should the card be formal? informal? fancy?

Images, Colors, and Graphics—What pictures or images can you look for that will relate to the character or author? What graphics will help someone reading the business card you design be more interested in the book? What colors best suit the author or character? If the character or author had a logo, what would it look like?

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Rubric for Business Card Book Reports

Appropriate tagline, product or service, and/or other details	All information on the card is related to the character or author and the connections are easy to understand.	All information on the card is related to the character or author and most connections are easy to understand.	All information on the card is related to the character or author but the connections are less obvious.	Information does not relate to the character or author. There seems to be no connection.	
Size and style of text and images	Text is easy to read and the style of the font and layout is quite creative. It matches the character or author well.	Text is easy to read and the style of the font and layout is good. It matches the character or author.	Text is slightly harder to read in places on the card. The style of the font and layout are acceptable.	The text is too small and/or the style of the font and layout do not match the character or author.	
Relates images, colors, and graphics to character or author	Graphic elements are related to the character or author, are thoughtfully cropped, are of high quality, and enhance reader interest or understanding.	Graphic elements are related to the character or author, are of good quality, and enhance reader interest or understanding.	Graphic elements are related to the character or author, and are of good quality.	Graphic elements seem randomly chosen, are of low quality, OR distract the reader.	
Spelling, punctuation, and grammar	There are no spelling, punctuation, or grammar errors.	There are 1-3 spelling, punctuation, or grammar errors.	There are 4-5 spelling, punctuation, and grammar errors.	There are more than 5 spelling, punctuation, and grammar errors.	

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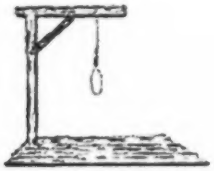
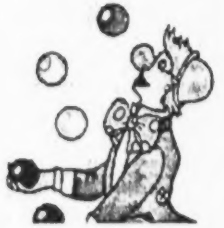


Tom Sawyer

Superstitious, Brave, and Adventurous



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